

talents at the Foster City Recreation Department, the ELLIPSE Peninsula AIDS Services, and the Peninsula Association for Retarded Children and Adults [PARCA].

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in commending Ms. Annie Chau for her outstanding service to our community and congratulating her for her academic achievements.

LINKED FINANCING—A NEW ALTERNATIVE FOR AVIATION FUNDING

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation which will establish a new funding mechanism for the Federal Aviation Administration called linked financing. This is an innovative and bold new mechanism for ensuring that the Federal Aviation Administration receives the funding it requires while preserving the advantages of the existing tax structure.

I have worked closely with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association on this legislation, and I must credit my friend and former colleague, Jim Lightfoot of Iowa, with advancing this idea in the previous Congress.

Linked financing is based on a simple premise: The services provided by the FAA are an essential Government function, for which users pay. So it ought to be possible to spend more on FAA programs—when and if users are willing to pay more. But as we know, this isn't necessarily the case under existing budget rules. The cap on overall discretionary spending constrains our ability to increase spending on certain transportation programs, even when the users are willing to increase their contribution.

The administration has proposed replacing the current aviation taxes with direct user fees for FAA services to pilots and the airlines. However, user fees have many problems. They are costly to collect, they provide no incentive to manage costs, they have safety implications, and—most important—FAA would have little direct accountability to Congress for how the agency spends the money.

Linked financing is a better alternative. It would retain the excise taxes which airway system users now pay on airline tickets, fuel, and cargo. These taxes would continue to feed the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. The trust fund is for aviation spending only, and it finances most of the FAA's budget.

Under linked financing, what aviation users pay in taxes for a given year would depend on what Congress allowed the FAA to spend the year before. When the FAA's spending goes up, the taxes collected would be adjusted upward by a corresponding amount the following year, according to a predetermined formula. A narrow upper limit on the tax rates would keep the rates at a reasonable level. The objective is for tax revenues to match spending from year to year. I am confident that almost all of the necessary growth in tax revenue would result from aviation industry growth, not tax rate increases. After all, most of the long-term growth in FAA operations spending is justified by increased aviation industry growth. But if

circumstances make it necessary for this essential safety-related agency to receive more revenue through tax rate adjustment, the formula would provide for that.

On the other hand, when FAA spending drops, tax rates would drop automatically the following year to reflect the decrease. This would ensure that users aren't paying for something they don't get. And aviation users would see a swift and direct benefit from coming to Congress with ways to reduce FAA spending as well as to increase it.

Linked financing also addresses the constraints imposed by the discretionary spending cap. Under the current rules, additional aviation revenue doesn't automatically lead to additional aviation spending. Why? Because overall discretionary spending is capped, regardless of how much money the Government takes in for a particular function.

The purpose of the spending caps is to help reduce the deficit by controlling government spending instead of raising taxes. However, under linked financing, aviation users would pay for the increased spending for FAA—not other taxpayers.

Therefore, the linked financing plan establishes an annual trust fund reserve account which would be available to the appropriations committees to supplement the resources otherwise available to them within the discretionary cap. This annual reserve account would be outside the discretionary cap, so the discretionary cap would not limit the ability of Congress to spend the funds deposited in the reserve account. The amount deposited in the annual reserve account each year would be equal to the annual increase in Aviation Trust Fund revenue, if any.

The key elements of linked financing are:

First, an adjustable tax rate which is linked to the amount of spending on the air transportation system.

Second, an annual reserve account outside the discretionary cap which is linked to the yearly increase in aviation tax revenue.

Linked financing assures that the taxes that aviation users pay are promptly spent for aviation purposes. And it does this without major changes to the current budget process or the ability of Congress to oversee FAA's spending.

As an innovative mechanism for using dedicated taxes—taxes collected for a specific purpose—linked financing could offer a solution for other user-financed government programs, as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Clinton administration's ongoing opposition to balancing the Federal budget has caused the surplus in the Aviation Trust Fund, once measured in billions of dollars, to dry up. For years I joined many Members of this House in asking that these surplus funds be spent on the intended purpose. The reauthorization of aviation taxes and highway spending programs gives the 105th Congress offers of a unique opportunity to change the way we fund these priority capital programs.

In fact, Senators BOND and CHAFEE recently introduced legislation in the other body which establishes a direct link between the amount collected annually in gas tax revenues and spending for highway programs. And although I disagree with the administration's user fee concept, I was interested to read in the President's budget that a direct link is now needed between dedicated taxes and the level of funding for the agency operations that affect them.

I believe linked financing holds considerable promise for addressing the future funding needs of our Nation's air transportation system, and could also be a solution for other transportation modes, and even other functions of government with dedicated sources of revenue.

Mr. Speaker, linked financing is an idea which deserves serious consideration. I urge my colleagues to give it their attention.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF JACKIE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 1997

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and honor that I stand here in this Chamber and shower the late, great Jackie Robinson with praises and accolades for his contribution to major league baseball. Jackie Robinson always had fire in his eyes. There was an intensity in them, a determination from the lonesome odyssey of 1947 when he integrated baseball and changed America.

The versatile Jackie Robinson began his stellar sporting career in 1933 as a letterman in football, basketball, baseball, and track in Pasadena, CA. Destined for stardom, Robinson made the Pomona (CA) Tournament Baseball All-Star team, in his senior year, that included future major league standouts such as Ted Williams and Bob Lemon.

Jackie Robinson's baseball career led him to many challenges outside the sports arena. After being traded to the New York Giants in December 1956, Robinson contemplated retirement. The following month, Robinson announced his retirement, moving from the dugout to a desk, trading his bat for a pen. Robinson became vice president of Community Affairs for the Chock Full O'Nuts Co., a restaurant chain. In 1964, he resigned from the restaurant company to organize the Freedom National Bank in Harlem.

The black-owned bank's mission was "a community enterprise which will in every way belong to the people it is to serve * * *." As chairman of the board, Robinson helped raise more than \$1.5 million.

That same year, 1964, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller of New York, asked him to become one of six deputy national directors. Robinson was Rockefeller's first black staff member. Rockefeller later named him to his executive committee as special assistant of community affairs.

Today, 50 years later, we honor Jack Roosevelt Robinson for his contributions to our beloved game of peanuts and crackerjacks. Our game where the only race that matters is the race to the bag. When color is only a means to distinguish one uniform from that of another. Robinson made it possible for all Americans to see beyond skin color and assess a person's true character. For without Jackie's inspiration and dedication, America's game would not be what it is today, our national pastime. For this reason we have cause to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this barrier breaker and remember his hardships as well as his triumphs.